MODERN MANIFESTO

Chapter Two

Power, Production, Humanity, and the Future

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This chapter belongs to a work of political and philosophical fiction. The figure known as “the Leader” is a fictional character, and the speeches and public rituals described here form part of the narrative world. Some scenes portray dangerous collective behavior. They are presented as unsettling features of the story rather than as instructions or encouragement to imitate them.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONFERENCE OF PRODUCERS

Narrator

To remain at the Leader's side was to witness scenes few others were ever permitted to see. That day was no exception. In the largest hall in the country, the most prominent manufacturers, engineers, investors, and industrialists had gathered beneath one roof. I sat quietly at the edge of the hall, following every movement of his eyes and every word that left his mouth.

The Leader stood behind the lectern. The projector lights fell across his stern face, and a deep silence settled over the audience. When he began, his voice was measured, firm, and without hesitation.

The Leader

"Gentlemen, our first decision has always been clear. We are a country rich in natural resources. Yet the true value of a resource is not created when it is taken from the ground; it is created when knowledge transforms it. We sell raw material, and elsewhere it is turned into technology worth many times more. If we remain at the beginning of the value chain, we surrender the greater share of our future. Our first task, therefore, is to strengthen the productive economy."

He paused, allowing his gaze to travel across the hall.

"We must enter the age of advanced production. Robotics. Artificial intelligence. Automation. Machines that perform difficult and repetitive work; machines that serve medicine, industry, agriculture, infrastructure, research, and public life. We must build them here, with such quality that they satisfy our own needs and compete beyond our borders. A country that exports knowledge does not merely become richer. It becomes harder to make dependent."

Narrator

The hall seemed to tighten around his voice. Hope and disbelief appeared together on the faces before me. Some of the older industrialists listened with the caution of men who had heard ambitious promises

before. The younger engineers leaned forward as though the future had suddenly moved closer.

The Leader

"China and the United States became economic giants not merely because they possessed money, but because they learned how to organize production, knowledge, capital, and scale. The battlefield of this century is innovation. We have already begun, but beginning is not enough. Government projects alone cannot create a technological civilization. You must build products that survive outside government contracts, products that cross borders, products whose names become familiar in markets we do not yet occupy."

Narrator

A veteran hardware manufacturer raised his hand. He said they had workshops and production lines, but needed capital, skilled labor, stable rules, and access to supply chains. How, he asked, could anyone invest for ten years if the rules changed every two?

The Leader

For a moment, a rare smile appeared on the Leader's face.

"That is precisely the question you should ask. The state must not pretend it can manufacture everything itself. Its duty is to make the field possible: predictable law, early-stage financing, technology parks, access to critical components, serious vocational education, and a permanent bridge between universities and industry. From fundamental research to mass production, the chain must be connected. But none of this will matter without you. I am not asking you merely to manufacture robots. I am asking you to manufacture confidence in the future."

Narrator

Applause moved through the hall, cautious at first and then stronger. Some exchanged glances, calculating costs and risks. In one corner, a group of young engineers had already begun whispering about prototypes.

The Leader ended that part of his address with a sentence I would remember for years.

The Leader

“Oil must never again be the definition of our wealth. Knowledge, skill, production, and the ability to create what the world needs—these are the resources that do not run dry.”

A NEW DAY

Narrator

The conference ended, but something new had begun among the younger generation. They had heard more than an industrial program. They had heard a philosophy of scale: the idea that a nation could look beyond the anxieties of the present and imagine itself from a greater distance.

The Leader

“Imagine a human being standing on the Moon and looking back at Earth. What does he see? Not the borders drawn in our atlases. Not customs posts, political slogans, or the arguments with which generations divide themselves. He sees one planet inhabited by one human species.”

“That does not mean language, faith, culture, memory, or nationality are meaningless. They are part of what makes human life rich. But difference must not become a license for cruelty. From far enough away, we are reminded of something politics often makes us forget: our destinies are connected.”

Narrator

The hall became quiet again. Even those who had spent the afternoon thinking about contracts and production figures seemed, for a moment, to leave their calculations behind. I knew then that the speech was no longer merely economic. A wider philosophy was beginning to take shape.

THE LEADER'S BIRTHDAY

Narrator

It was the sixth of Aban, 1415 in the Solar Hijri calendar—the Leader’s birthday. The central square was crowded. Yet when he appeared, he did not begin with politics or economics. He began with the human being.

The Leader

“People have forgotten how to live. Hard years can teach us endurance, but endurance alone is not life. We are researchers placed in this world to learn—to understand nature, one another, and ourselves. We must ask what it means to be human before we decide what kind of society we wish to build.”

“Life is not merely survival. It is learning, loving, taking responsibility, and becoming better than the person you were yesterday. If suffering has taught us nothing, then we have paid for it twice.”

Narrator

The younger people listened most intensely. They sensed that his language had moved beyond administration. To them, the day seemed less like the birthday of a political figure and more like the birth of a new vocabulary—one that tried to place power and compassion in the same sentence.

REBIRTH AT NIGHT

Narrator

Then came the month of silence. For weeks the Leader rarely left his room. Meetings were shortened. Visitors were turned away. The government continued under standing orders, while rumors multiplied around his absence.

One evening he appeared before me, thinner than before but with the same piercing gaze.

The Leader

“Prepare a speech.”

He waited, then added: “In the small city beside the capital.”

Narrator

The city had become controversial. A local movement was challenging central authority, and its residents had openly defied national restrictions on marijuana. The Leader chose to address them at ten at night.

What followed became one of the most disputed episodes of his life. In front of the crowd, he deliberately crossed a political taboo and smoked marijuana. Some interpreted the gesture as solidarity, others as provocation, and still others as reckless theater. But his speech quickly moved elsewhere.

The Leader

"From the womb onward, everything touches everything. Light, hunger, affection, violence, education, chance, the food placed in your hands, the words spoken over you—each leaves something behind. We are shaped by consequences we do not always see."

"Politics is no different. A decision signed tonight may enter the life of a child who has not yet been born. That is why freedom without responsibility becomes another form of blindness."

Narrator

The gathering then took on the character of a ritual. In the earliest accounts, some participants injured themselves in an attempt to symbolize purification. I remember the shock more clearly than the symbolism. Whatever the Leader intended, the sight revealed the danger of a crowd that begins to treat metaphor as command.

He stopped the escalation and redirected the act. Red ribbons were passed through the crowd and placed on the ground as symbols of guilt, grief, and the desire to begin again.

The Leader

"Purity does not come from wounding the body. If you have harmed someone, repair what you can. If you have stolen, return it. If you have lied, tell the truth. If you seek forgiveness, begin with responsibility. No wound can substitute for that."

ANOTHER NIGHT IN THE CITY

Narrator

On another night, soft music drifted through the streets while thousands of phones streamed the gathering live. The crowd had been

asked to bring written confessions, fears, regrets, or promises. What began as spectacle gradually became something quieter.

The Leader

"Have you ever done something wrong and discovered that you did not know how to return from it? Human beings need a path back. Religion has often provided one language for repentance; philosophy, law, and conscience provide others. But no institution can perform repentance on your behalf."

"If there is a God, responsibility still matters. If there is no God, responsibility matters no less. Muhammad, Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, philosophers, poets, and nameless people before us all belong to humanity's long attempt to understand suffering, guilt, mercy, and meaning. Do not turn their names into weapons."

Narrator

People held their phones aloft. Some cried. Some laughed. Some simply listened. Written notes were placed into transparent boxes instead of blood being spilled onto the earth.

That night taught me something I had not understood before. Collective faith contains two possibilities. It can remind isolated people that they belong to something larger, but it can also dissolve judgment and turn admiration into obedience. A leader who forgets that boundary can become dangerous even while speaking of hope.

The celebration eventually softened into music, conversation, and dancing. Those watching through their screens wanted to be there—not merely to observe a politician, but to participate in the feeling that history was occurring in real time.

And from that night onward, the Leader was no longer merely a political figure to many of them. He was becoming a symbol. That transformation fascinated me, and it frightened me.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF IRAN

The Leader

“People of Iran, may the blessings of the good who came before us, of our ancestors and of all those who labored for this land, be upon you. If I could leave you with only one piece of advice, it would be one word: history. Read history. Read it again. Then read the account written by the other side.”

“We come from an ancient civilization, but antiquity alone does not guarantee wisdom. Nations can inherit magnificent ruins and still repeat old mistakes. The task is not to worship the past. The task is to understand it.”

“The Qajar era must be studied with its failures, foreign pressures, internal weakness, and complexity. The Pahlavi era must be judged by what it built and what it suppressed. The Islamic Republic must likewise be examined through evidence: what it constructed, what it damaged, whom it served, and where it failed. No period deserves absolute sanctification, and none should be reduced to a slogan.”

His voice rose.

“And never forget corruption. Never forget those who treated public wealth as private inheritance, those who used family connections, monopoly, influence, and secrecy to grow rich while ordinary people paid the cost.”

“Every official who wronged this nation must be answerable to law. No name, uniform, title, family, ideology, or history of service can become a shield against justice.”

“But listen carefully: justice is not revenge. We will not answer lawlessness with lawlessness. Those who served the public deserve recognition. Those accused of theft or abuse deserve investigation, evidence, a defense, and a fair court. If we abandon law in the name of cleansing corruption, we become another form of corruption ourselves.”

“Read history not so that you may inherit its hatreds, but so that you may recognize its patterns. The past is not a cemetery in which we bury our enemies. It is a laboratory in which humanity has already paid the price of countless experiments.”

Narrator

The crowd remained silent for a few seconds after he finished. I had seen applause, devotion, anger, and fear around him. But silence was different. Silence meant that, for at least a moment, people were thinking.

THE PRINCIPLE BENEATH THE SPEECH

Narrator

Looking back, I believe Chapter Two was the moment the Leader's scattered ideas began to resemble a manifesto. Production without knowledge was dependence. Power without law was tyranny. Identity without humanity became hostility. Freedom without responsibility became chaos. And faith in a leader, if allowed to replace personal judgment, could become its own kind of prison.

The Leader

"Build, but ask why you build. Become powerful, but decide what restrains your power. Remember your history, but do not become its captive. Love your country, but do not require hatred of another people as proof of that love. And whatever you believe about me, never surrender your right to question me."

Narrator

That was the contradiction at the center of him: a man capable of inspiring devotion who insisted, at least in words, that devotion must have limits. Whether the country would remember the second half of that lesson remained to be seen.

End of Chapter Two